

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

**Analytical results and sample locality map
of heavy-mineral-concentrate and rock samples
from the Owens Peak Wilderness Study Area (CA-010-026),
Kern and Tulare Counties, California**

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This report is preliminary and has not been reviewed for conformity with U.S. Geological Survey editorial standards and stratigraphic nomenclature. Any use of trade names is for descriptive purposes only and does not imply endorsement by the USGS.

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STUDIES RELATED TO WILDERNESS

Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Study Areas

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (Public Law 94-579, October 21, 1976) requires the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Bureau of Mines to conduct mineral surveys on certain areas to determine their mineral values, if any. Results must be made available to the public and be submitted to the President and the Congress. This report presents the results of a geochemical survey of the Owens Peak Wilderness Study Area (CA-010-026), Kern and Tulare Counties, California.

INTRODUCTION

In May 1984, the U.S. Geological Survey conducted a reconnaissance geochemical survey of the Owens Peak Wilderness Study Area, Kern and Tulare Counties, California.

The Owens Peak Wilderness Study Area (CA-010-026) is located in the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains (see fig. 1). The study area lies between Walker Pass on the south, Chimney Meadow on the north, Chimney and Canebrake Creeks on the west, borders the Sierran crest on the east, and is about 25 miles east of Isabella, California. Road access to the area is by Highway 178 from the south, County Road J41 from the north, and spurs off of the Canebrake road from the west. There is no road access from the east. The terrane is generally steep and rugged with elevations ranging from about 4,500 ft in the Canebrake Creek valley in the southwest to 8,453 ft at the summit of Owens Peak in the east. The vegetation is typically sagebrush and mountain mahogany on lower slopes. Higher country is covered by Jeffrey Pine, incense cedar, black oak, ceanothus, and rare Sugar Pine on the north side of Lamont Peak. The middle elevations have Digger Pine, live oak, ceanothus, manzanita, and chinquapin.

Miller (1931) completed a reconnaissance geologic study in which he named leucocratic granitic rocks in the region the Isabella Granodiorite. Miller and Webb (1940) published a small-scale geologic map of the Kernville 30-minute quadrangle which describes the Kernville Series and the Sacatar Quartz Diorite. Dibblee (1954) mapped the geology of the Inyokern 15° quadrangle just to the east of the study area. Bergquist and Nitkiewicz (1982) published a geologic map of the Domeland Wilderness, 7 mi west of this study area. The geology and mineral resource potential of the Rockhouse Basin Wilderness Study Area, 15 mi west of the study areas, was described by Taylor and others (1984) and summarized by Taylor (1984).

The geology consists dominantly of granitic rocks of the Sierra Nevada batholith that represent at least three major periods of intrusive activity. The majority of the study area is underlain by leucocratic, nonfoliated Cretaceous rocks of granitic to granodioritic composition. There is also an older set of more mafic granitic rocks of Jurassic and (or) Cretaceous age that are granodioritic to tonolitic in composition and often display a foliated to schlieric texture. The oldest intrusive rocks in the area are probably Jurassic and (or) Triassic in age. These rocks are mesocratic to melanocratic, gabbroic to dioritic, and foliated to gneissic in texture. The granitic rocks intrude Mesozoic to Paleozoic quartz-mica schist, quartzite, and marble. There are zones of garnet-epidote-wollastonite calc-silicate hornfels near marble-granite intrusive contacts.

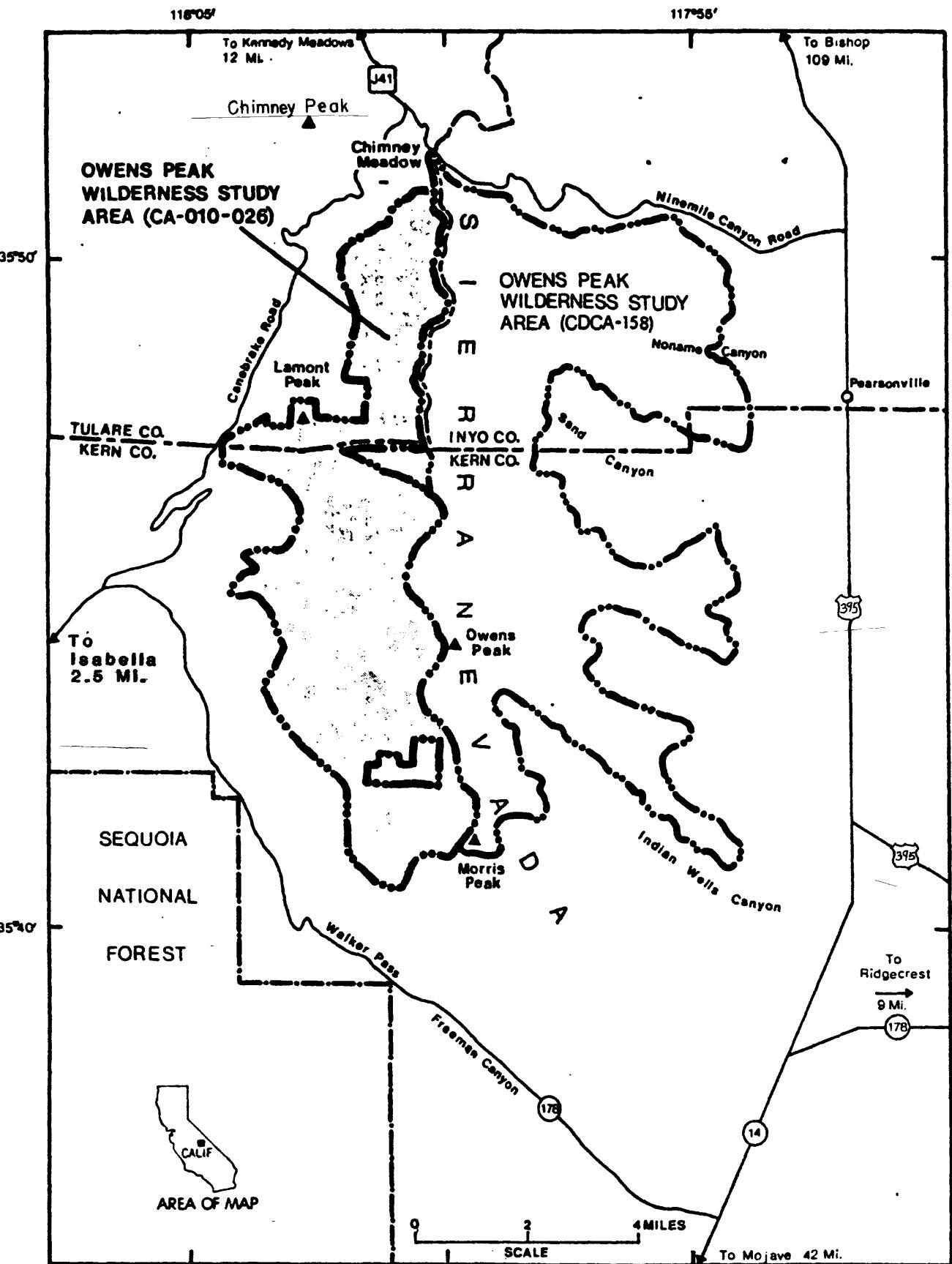


Figure 1. Index map of the Owens Peak Wilderness Study Area, Kern and Tulare Counties, California.

METHODS OF STUDY

Sample Media

Heavy-mineral-concentrate samples provide information about the chemistry of certain minerals in rock material eroded from the drainage basin upstream from each sample site. The selective concentration of minerals, many of which may be ore-related, permits determination of some elements that are not easily detected in an unconcentrated stream-sediment sample.

Analyses of unaltered or unmineralized rock samples provide background geochemical data for individual rock units. On the other hand, analyses of altered or mineralized rocks, where present, may provide useful geochemical information about the major- and trace-element assemblages associated with a mineralizing system.

Sample Collection

The eastern border of the study area lies along the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. In order to evaluate the area geochemically, samples were collected along streams draining to the east, as well as from streams located within the study area. Concentrate samples were collected at 53 sites. Fifteen mineralized or altered rocks were also collected (fig. 2).

Heavy-mineral-concentrate samples

Heavy-mineral-concentrate samples were collected from the same active alluvium. Each bulk sample was screened with a 2.0-mm (10-mesh) screen to remove the coarse material. The less than 2.0-mm fraction was panned until most of the quartz, feldspar, organic material, and clay-sized material were removed.

Rock samples

Rock samples were collected from outcrops or exposures and from stream gravels in the vicinity of the plotted site location. The samples collected were altered and/or mineralized rocks. The rocks are described in Table 5.

Sample Preparation

After air drying, bromoform (specific gravity 2.8) was used to remove the remaining quartz and feldspar from the heavy-mineral-concentrate samples that had been panned in the field. The resultant heavy-mineral sample was separated into three fractions using a large electromagnet (in this case a modified Frantz Isodynamic Separator). The most magnetic material, primarily magnetite, was not analyzed. The second fraction, largely ferromagnesian silicates and iron oxides, was saved for analysis/archival storage. The third fraction (the least magnetic material which may include the nonmagnetic ore minerals, zircon, sphene, etc.) was split using a Jones splitter. One split was hand-ground for spectrographic analysis; the other split was saved for mineralogical analysis. These magnetic separates are the same separates that would be produced by using a Frantz Isodynamic Separator set at a slope of 15° and a tilt of 10° with a current of 0.1 ampere to remove the magnetite and ilmenite, and a current of 1.0 ampere to split the remainder of the sample into paramagnetic and nonmagnetic fractions.

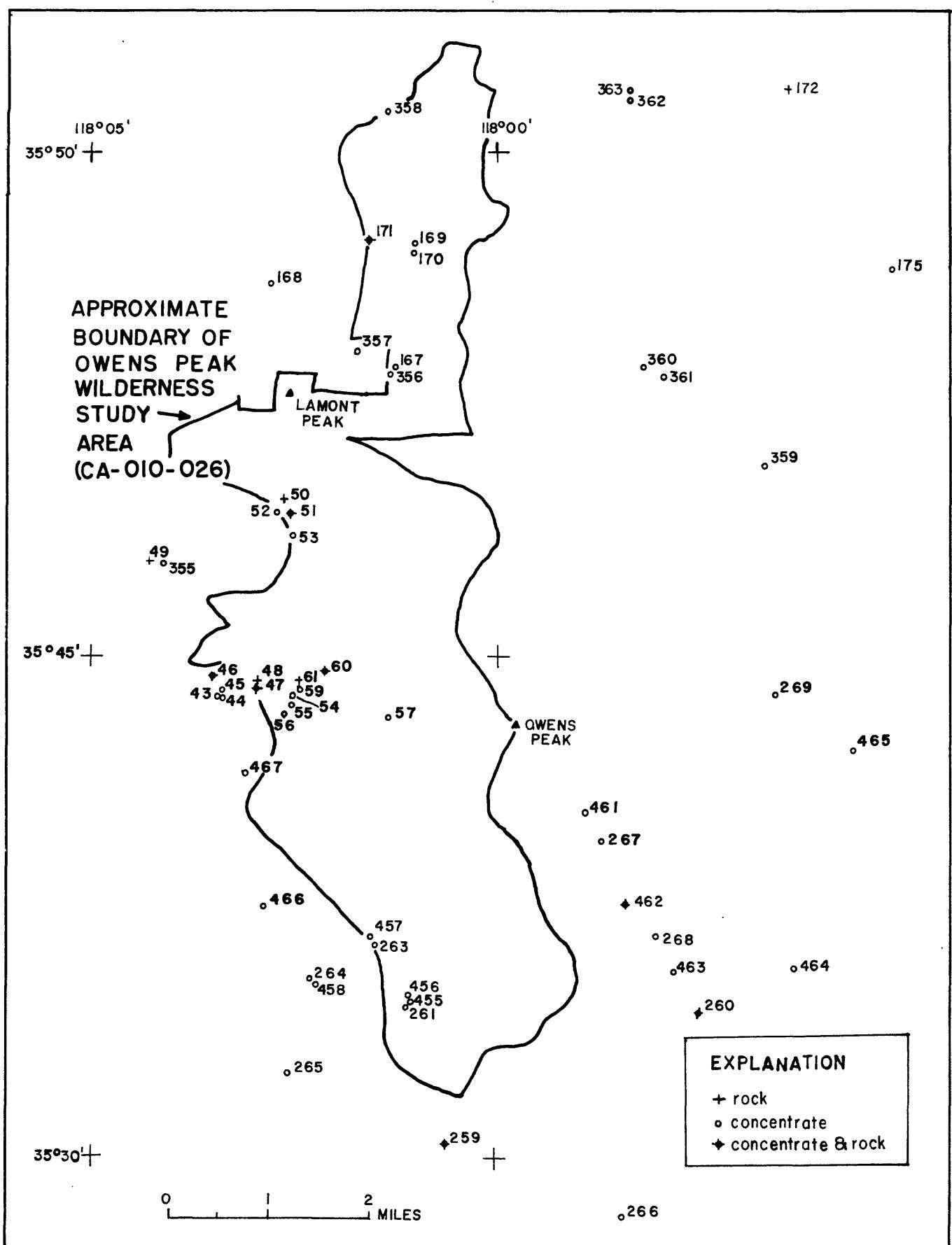


Figure 2. Sampling sites in the Owens Peak Wilderness Study Area, Kern and Tulare Counties, California.

Rock samples were crushed and then pulverized to minus 0.15 mm with ceramic plates.

Sample Analysis

Spectrographic method

The heavy-mineral-concentrate and rock samples were analyzed for 31 elements using a semiquantitative, direct-current arc emission spectrographic method (Grimes and Marranzino, 1968; Myers, and others, 1961). The elements analyzed and their lower limits of determination are listed in Table 1. Spectrographic results were obtained by visual comparison of spectra derived from the sample against spectra obtained from standards made from pure oxides and carbonates. Standard concentrations are geometrically spaced over any given order of magnitude of concentration as follows: 100, 50, 20, 10, and so forth. Samples whose concentrations are estimated to fall between those values are assigned values of 70, 30, 15, and so forth. The precision of the analytical method is approximately plus or minus one reporting interval at the 83 percent confidence level and plus or minus two reporting intervals at the 96 percent confidence level (Motooka and Grimes, 1976). Values determined for the major elements (iron, magnesium, calcium, and titanium) are given in weight percent; all others are given in parts per million (micrograms/gram). Analytical data for samples from the Owens Peak Wilderness Study Area are listed in Tables 3 and 4.

Chemical Methods

Other methods of analysis used on samples from the Owens Peak Wilderness Study Area are summarized in Table 2.

Analytical results for heavy-mineral-concentrate and rock samples are listed in Tables 3 and 4, respectively.

ROCK ANALYSIS STORAGE SYSTEM

Upon completion of all analytical work, the analytical results were entered into a computer-based file called Rock Analysis Storage System (RASS). This data base contains both descriptive geological information and analytical data. Any or all of this information may be retrieved and converted to a binary form (STATPAC) for computerized statistical analysis or publication (VanTrump and Miesch, 1977).

DESCRIPTION OF DATA TABLES

Tables 3 and 4 list the analyses for the samples of heavy-mineral concentrate and rock, respectively. For the two tables, the data are arranged so that column 1 contains USGS field numbers. These numbers correspond to the numbers shown on the site location map (fig. 2). Columns in which the element headings show the letter "s" below the element symbol are emission spectrographic analyses; "aa" indicates atomic absorption analyses; and "cm" indicates colorimetric. A letter "N" in the tables indicates that a given element was looked for but not detected at the lower limit of determination shown for that element in Table 1 or 2. If an element was observed but was below the lowest reporting value, a "less than" symbol (<) was entered in the

tables in front of the lower limit of determination. If an element was observed but was above the highest reporting value, a "greater than" symbol (>) was entered in the tables in front of the upper limit of determination. If an element was not looked for in a sample, two dashes (--) are entered in tables 3 and 4 in place of an analytical value. Because of the formatting used in the computer program that produced Tables 3 and 4, some of the elements listed in these tables (Fe, Mg, Ca, Ti, Ag, and Be) carry one or more nonsignificant digits to the right of the significant digits. The analysts did not determine these elements to the accuracy suggested by the extra zeros.

Table 5 contains descriptions of the rock samples from the study area.

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TABLE 1.--Limits of determination for the spectrographic analysis of rocks based on a 10-mg sample

[The spectrographic limits of determination for heavy-mineral-concentrate samples are based on a 5-mg sample, and are therefore two reporting intervals higher than the limits given for rocks and stream sediments]

Elements	Lower determination limit	Upper determination limit
Percent		
Iron (Fe)	0.05	20
Magnesium (Mg)	.02	10
Calcium (Ca)	.05	20
Titanium (Ti)	.002	1
Parts per million		
Manganese (Mn)	10	5,000
Silver (Ag)	0.5	5,000
Arsenic (As)	200	10,000
Gold (Au)	10	500
Boron (B)	10	2,000
Barium (Ba)	20	5,000
Beryllium (Be)	1	1,000
Bismuth (Bi)	10	1,000
Cadmium (Cd)	20	500
Cobalt (Co)	5	2,000
Chromium (Cr)	10	5,000
Copper (Cu)	5	20,000
Lanthanum (La)	20	1,000
Molybdenum (Mo)	5	2,000
Niobium (Nb)	20	2,000
Nickel (Ni)	5	5,000
Lead (Pb)	10	20,000
Antimony (Sb)	100	10,000
Scandium (Sc)	5	100
Tin (Sn)	10	1,000
Strontium (Sr)	100	5,000
Vanadium (V)	10	10,000
Tungsten (W)	50	10,000
Yttrium (Y)	10	2,000
Zinc (Zn)	200	10,000
Zirconium (Zr)	10	1,000
Thorium (Th)	100	2,000

Table 2.--Chemical methods used

[AA = atomic absorption and S = spectrophotometry]

Element or constituent determined	Sample Type	Method	Determination limit (micrograms/gram or ppm)	Analyst	Reference
Gold (Au)	Rock	AA	0.1	J. G. Crock	Thompson and others, 1968
Arsenic (As)	"	AA	5	D. Fey	<u>Modification of Viets, 1978</u>
Antimony (Sb)	"	AA	2		
Zinc (Zn)	"	AA	2		
Bismuth (Bi)	"	AA	2		
Cadmium (Cd)	"	AA	0.1		
Tungsten (W)	Heavy-mineral concentrate	S	2	K. A. Romine	Welsch, 1983.

TABLE 3. ANALYSES OF HEAVY-MINERAL-CONCENTRATE SAMPLES FROM OWENS PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA, KERN AND TULARE COUNTIES, CALIFORNIA.--Continued

Sample	Latitude	Longitude	Fe-pct. s	Mg-pct. s	Ca-pct. s	Ti-pct. s	Mn-ppt. s	Ag-ppt. s	As-ppt. s	Au-ppt. s	B-ppt. s	Ba-ppt. s
OW461	35 43 23	117 58 52	1.0	.07	15	>2	700	N	N	N	20	100
OW462	35 42 30	117 58 25	.7	.10	15	>2	700	N	N	N	20	100
OW463	35 41 50	117 57 50	.5	.10	7	>2	300	N	N	N	20	200
OW464	35 41 50	117 56 21	1.0	.07	10	>2	700	N	N	N	20	150
OW465	35 44 1	117 55 35	.5	.10	20	>2	500	N	N	N	20	200
OW466	35 42 29	118 2 53	.5	<.05	15	>2	1,000	N	N	N	<20	N
OW467	35 43 48	118 3 7	.5	<.05	10	>2	1,000	N	N	N	20	N

TABLE 3. ANALYSES OF HEAVY-MINERAL-CONCENTRATE SAMPLES FROM OWENS PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA, KERN AND TULARE COUNTIES, CALIFORNIA.--Continued

Sample	Be-ppm s	Bi-ppm s	Cd-ppm s	Co-ppm s	Cr-ppm s	Cu-ppm s	La-ppm s	Mo-ppm s	Nb-ppm s	Mn-ppm s	Pb-ppm s	Sb-ppm s
OW461	N	N	10	N	N	700	10	150	N	50	N	
OW462	N	70	<10	N	<10	500	<10	100	N	1,000	N	
OW463	N	N	<10	N	<10	150	N	N	<10	30	N	
OW464	N	20	N	10	N	700	10	200	N	50	N	
OW465	N	<20	N	<10	N	700	N	70	N	<20	N	
OW466	N	N	N	<10	N	500	15	100	N	N	N	
OW467	N	N	N	10	N	500	15	100	N	N	N	

TABLE 3. ANALYSES OF HEAVY-MINERAL-CONCENTRATE SAMPLES FROM OWENS PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA, KERN AND TULARE COUNTIES, CALIFORNIA.--Continued

Sample	Sc-ppm s	Sn-ppm s	Sr-ppm s	V-ppm s	W-ppm s	Y-ppm s	Zn-ppm s	Zr-ppm s	Th-ppm s	W-ppm ca
OW461	N	50	<200	200	N	500	N	>2,000	200	62.0
OW462	N	50	500	200	200	300	N	>2,000	500	>1,000.0
OW463	N	N	500	150	100	300	N	>2,000	N	460.0
OW464	N	50	N	200	N	500	N	>2,000	N	320.0
OW465	N	30	500	100	N	200	N	>2,000	<200	9.5
OW466	N	<20	N	200	N	300	N	>2,000	N	6.0
OW467	N	<20	N	200	N	500	N	>2,000	N	175.0

TABLE 4. ANALYSES OF ROCK SAMPLES FROM OWENS PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA, KERN AND TULARE COUNTIES, CALIFORNIA.--Continued

Sample	W-ppm s	Y-ppm s	Zn-ppm s	Zr-ppm s	Th-ppm s	As-ppm s	Sb-ppm s	Zn-ppm s	As-ppm s
OW046R2	<50	20	<200	100	<200	30	<2	<1	<.1
OW047R1	<50	<10	200	20	<200	<5	<2	<2	--
OW047R2	<50	10	<200	70	<200	26	<2	<2	<.1
OW048R1	70	15	<200	100	<200	19	<2	5	--
OW049R1	<50	15	<200	150	<200	12	<2	22	--
OW050R1	<50	10	<200	20	<200	<5	<2	<1	15
OW051R1	<50	<10	<200	100	<200	<5	<2	<2	7
OW060R1	<50	<10	<200	15	<200	<5	<1	2	<.1
OW061R1	<50	15	<200	70	<200	<5	<2	67	<.1
OW061R2	<50	<10	<200	<10	<200	<5	<2	<2	<.1
OW171R2	<50	<10	<200	150	<200	<5	<2	<1	<1
OW172R2	<50	<10	<200	<10	<200	<5	910	<2	4
OW259R1	<50	<10	<200	20	<200	<5	<2	<2	<.1
OW260R1	<50	10	<200	30	<200	<5	<2	3	--
OW462R1	<50	20	<200	150	<200	<5	<2	42	--

Table 5. Description of rock samples

DW 46R2	Disseminated pyrite in very fine grained gneiss
DW 47R1	Quartz epidote skarn
DW 47R2	Iron stained pegmatite
DW 48R1	Quartz garnet epidote skarn
DW 49R1	Quartz epidote skarn
DW 50R1	Composite sample mafic schist, quartz veins, intrusive rocks
DW 51R1	Disseminated pyrite in quartzite and felsic intrusives
DW 60R1	Copper stained quartzite
DW 61R1	Sheared diorite gneiss
DW 61R2	Iron stained quartz
DW 171R2	Disseminated pyrite in granite
DW 172R2	Molybdenite and pyrite in quartz
DW 259R1	Quartz veins in granodiorite
DW 260R1	Skarn ore
DW 462R1	Minor sulfides in skarn
